

WEALDSTONE LAST TWO MINUTES

Wycombe Wanderers (3) 4, Wealdstone 0

Attendance: 812

This Premier Midweek Floodlight League match at Loakes Park on Wednesday was like looking at the Boat Race all over again. Any resemblance to a contest disappeared after just two minutes.

That's how long it took Wycombe to go ahead through a Tony Horseman penalty. Subsequently they might have doubled their final score but for the intervention of fate, the woodwork and sheer boredom.

Wycombe, the league's current champions and already winners of their section in this year's competition, cruelly outclassed a Wealdstone side who have managed only one win in five matches against the Bucks outfit this season.

The exception was likewise a Floodlight League game, Wealdstone winning by the only goal at Lower Mead in December. Their rout in this return joins defeats in two Isthmian clashes — on this form Wycombe must take that title, too — and in the first round of the Amateur Cup.

The 800-odd gate — a mere trifle at Loakes Park, where this figure ranks as one of the SMALLEST crowds of the season — was probably a reflection of the fact that the outcome of matches between the two sides is nowadays all too predictable.

Or perhaps it was a comment on the absence of Wycombe's England men Ted Powell, Paul Fuschillo and Larry Pritchard — all rested with Friday's international at Falkirk in mind. Presumably a cricket score would have been in reach had this trio been available!

Wealdstone, for their part, were once again without the injured Gerry Olson, but even his Herculean presence in defence would scarcely have deterred the rampant opposing forwards.

Olson's deputy was Dave Price, better known and better employed as the reserve centre-forward. With full-backs Alan Dafforn and Gary Austin struggling to keep pace with Wycombe's sizzling use of the wings, this left only skipper Rob Williams and goalkeeper Alan Thomas to deal with one of the most free-scoring attacks in the country.

Thomas had one of his better games and the scoreline was no reflection on him — but for some untypical immaculate handling it could have been much worse, though on reflection it's hard to see how...

Things to come

The first sign of things to come followed a Wycombe corner only moments after the kick-off. John Delaney headed goalwards and the covering Tom Mahon was forced to fist the ball away. Horseman strolled up for the penalty and left Thomas stranded with a low drive side the right-hand post.

Barely seven minutes later busy little Geoff Anthony jinked his way down the right flank before cutting inside to unleash a mighty 18-yarder past the hapless goalkeeper.

Former Lower Mead men Keith Searle and Bernie Bremer had also demonstrated their ample shooting power before Wealdstone launched their first attack through Dave Yerby. The red-haired striker was perhaps the best visitor on view, yet like his colleagues he suffered from a huge and not surprising inferiority complex.

Three times he eluded the attentions of Delaney and Ian Rundle with some brilliant running into space; but on each occasion he simply lacked the confidence to even attempt rounding goalkeeper John Maskell, settling instead for an indecisive shot or cross to nowhere.

Had these chances counted Wealdstone might have salvaged some pride, if not the points. But by half-time Wycombe were further ahead when Horseman collected his second goal with a cracking half-volley.

After the interval Horseman was denied his hat-trick when Williams unwittingly blocked another thunderbolt on the line, while Wycombe defender Charlie Gale was also unlucky to hit a post. But 15 minutes from time Searle was on hand to tap home a simple close-range effort to join Horseman as Wycombe's leading goal scorer — with 43 goals.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; K. Blunt, C. Gale, I. Rundle, J. Delaney, B. Baker, B. Bremer, V. Faulkner, K. Searle, A. Horseman, G. Anthony, Sub. J. Hutchinson.
Wealdstone: A. Thomas; G. Austin, A. Dafforn, R. Williams, D. Price, C. Townsend, D. Yerby, T. Mahon, N. Bunker, J. Webb, A. Pentecost. Sub. G. Alleman.